



State of Connecticut

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Testimony of Senator Toni Boucher
In Support of SB 363, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES.

Chairman Slossberg, Chairman Spallone, Ranking Member McLachlan, Ranking Member Hetherington, and distinguished members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, today I testify in support of SB 363, AN ACT CONCERNING POLLING PLACES FOR PRIMARIES, and urge this committee to pass this bill. SB 363 would permit municipalities to use fewer polling places for primaries than for the general election.

The turnout difference between general elections and primary elections is glaring. The high water mark for recent turnout was the 2008 Presidential election, which garnered an impressive 78.14% turnout of Connecticut voters. Just over a year prior, turnout for an August 2009 Primary election was a meager 13.9%. Despite the disparity, our towns still had to properly staff and maintain the same number of polling places. This bill would give municipalities the flexibility to adjust the number of polling places depending on need.

As you know, there are potential municipal savings that could be realized through the elimination of polling locations. They include staffing costs, possible renting costs, the transportation of materials to each polling location, and the installation of phone lines for each polling location. In addition, some of my towns are finding it increasingly difficult to find enough poll workers to properly maintain each polling place, particularly in a low interest election.

During these difficult times, we need to offer our towns all the tools necessary to cut costs, and by allowing them to operate and pay for fewer polling places for lower turnout primaries, it will provide a small measure of financial relief that can be passed along to the taxpayers. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak in favor of SB 363.